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Secretary of the Commonwealth. A great part of the labor is thus already performed, and we have hoped that the Legislature, during the present session, would pass a resolve authorizing the reprinting of this corrected volume. Should this be determined upon, we hope that the services of Mr. Brigham will again be put in requisition. The experience and tact that he has acquired ought not to be lost to the community. We trust, likewise, that a selection will be made from the curious and valuable papers which Mr. Felt is arranging, and that the fruits of his labors also will come before the public in a tangible form. Massachusetts is bound, by gratitude to the founders of her institutions, to perpetuate their memory and disseminate the story of their deeds.

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2. — *The Song of the Bell, translated from the German of Schiller, for the Boston Academy of Music*, by S. A. ELIOT. The Music by Andreas Romberg. Boston ; Kidder & Wright, printers. 1837.

AMONG other curious particulars on the subject of bells contained in that oddest of books, the "Doctor," it is stated that it was not uncommon for bells to be cast within the precincts of monasteries, and that, as soon as the casting was finished, the bell was baptized, and immediately raised to its place in the belfry, in order that no profane hands might touch it after its consecration. It is probably a scene of this kind, which Schiller intended to represent in his "Song of the Bell." Whether Schiller originally designed it for music, we do not know, though there are some circumstances which lead us to suppose that such was not his intention. However this may have been, it has been made the subject of a musical composition by Andreas Romberg ; and it is of the whole, considered as a musical work, that we design to give an account. The German of Schiller has been translated into English for the use of the Boston Academy of Music, by Mr. Eliot. To preserve exactly the mechanical structure of the verse, line for line, syllable for syllable, accent for accent, preserving the rhymes precisely in the same position in which they were placed in the original, was a task which might well have been deemed an impossibility. But in order to give full effect to the music, this was necessary, and, notwithstanding its great difficulty, the translator has succeeded in performing it. Nor only this. We do not hesitate to say, that under all this accumulation of adventitious difficulties, incident to the use which

the translation was to serve, it is a work marked with the ease and force of an original composition.

The "Song of the Bell" is in its form dramatic, the interlocutors being the master and the chorus of workmen, who are engaged in casting the bell. From time to time the master gives directions with regard to the different processes, while the workmen describe the uses of the bell, moralizing upon the various events of human life with which they are connected. There is something in the form of the composition which reminds us of the chorus in the ancient drama, and one almost expects to find that the master is Vulcan, and that his workmen are the Cyclops, laboring at their furnaces in the bowels of Etna. But these workmen are no Cyclops forging the thunderbolts of Jupiter, or the armour of classic heroes, and discoursing of the immovable laws of Fate and Destiny. Neither are they the warlike artisans of the middle ages, like Harry Smith of the Wynd, ready alike to forge or to wear in battle their strong armour. These bell-founders are good German artisans, full of enthusiasm and love of all things in the world or in life, prone to speculations somewhat mystic, and withal possessing a certain quiet and unobtrusive humor.

The various subjects which are suggested by the different uses of the bell, naturally divide the song into several distinct portions. But the directions of the master are so introduced as to fix the attention upon the work which is going on, and to give unity to the whole. A similar effect has also been beautifully produced by the composer, who by introducing the same melody with slight variations whenever the master speaks, has given the same unity of character to the musical composition.

Notwithstanding that the general unity is so well preserved, still the poetry and the music being naturally divided as we have remarked, into several distinct portions, it will be more easy to convey an idea of the whole by describing each portion separately. To the direction of the master to commence their work, the workmen answer in chorus,

"To the work we now prepare,
A serious thought is surely due,
And cheerfully the toil we 'll share
If cheerful words be mingled too," &c.

The music of this chorus is simple, unpretending, and graceful. The master then directs them to feed the fire and add to the "melting copper" the "boiling tin."

"That the thick metallic mass
Rightly to the mould may pass."

CHORUS.—“What with fire’s dread power,
 We in the dark deep pit now hide,
 Shall on some lofty sacred tower
 Tell of our skill and form our pride,” &c.

The music of this chorus is a spirited and majestic movement, full of dignity, and well expressing the idea of the poetry.

The first use of the bell is at the baptism of the infant. The days of infancy, childhood, and the first delicious hours of youthful love, make the subject of some beautiful music. A sweet and expressive air describes with much beauty the earliest hours of infancy, which “are passed in sleep’s dominion mild.” The impetuous days of early manhood, when the youth “rushes to the world without,” his return home, his first emotions of love and the progress of the passion, make the subject of a solo and a duet. These three airs make, as it were, one scene in the piece, and in them the composer has shown great power of appreciating and expressing the sentiments of the poet.

The mixture of the different materials naturally leads to the idea of the union of the stronger and the gentler sex. The marriage festivities are described in a lively and pleasing melody. Next comes one of the most remarkable portions of the whole work. The bustle and hurry of active life, the labor and enterprise of the husband to amass wealth, and the busy household virtues of his wife, are described by the poet with exquisite but delicate and subdued humor. The composer has seized exactly the idea of the poet, and given a song containing just as much quiet, comic expression as the poetry requires. The hurry and bustle of a money-getting life are, we should think, as little adapted as any thing could be to the purposes of art. It is not a little remarkable that the composer should, in this instance, so exactly sympathize with, and realize the idea of the poet.

The toils and labors of life are not without their reward.

“The father cheerful from the door,
 His wide-extended homestead eyes,
 Tells all his smiling fortunes o’er;
 The future columns in his trees,
 His barn’s well-furnished stock he sees.

* * * * *

He boasts with swelling pride,
 Firm as the mountain side,
 Against the shock of fate
 Is now my happy state.”

These words make the subject of a quartette. The calm and soothing effect of a beautiful landscape, composed of richly cultivated grounds, is well expressed by soft music gradually increasing in force with the swelling feelings of the fortunate

owner. At this moment three other voices are added with the words,

“ Who can discern futurity?
Who can insure prosperity?
Quick, misfortune’s arrow flies,”

the music contrasting beautifully with the loud voices in which the preceding boast was expressed.

The master now directs the casting to begin.

* * * *

“ Strike the copper clear,
God preserve us here;
Sparkling to the rounded mould
It rushes hot, like liquid gold.”

Here the chorus describes the destructive effects of fire;

“ When bursting from her bonds, she ’s seen
To quit the safe and quiet hearth,
And wander lawless over the earth.”

The treatment of this subject by the composer deserves particular notice and commendation, inasmuch as musical authors are apt to mistake the true objects and capacities of their art, and to describe such scenes by attempting directly to imitate the noises, rather than by giving a musical expression of the emotions excited by them. The full examination of this chorus, which is somewhat long, would occupy too much space, but there is one point which we think deserves to be mentioned particularly. When the conflagration has spread desolation over the whole city, and there is no longer hope of checking its progress,

“ Hope now dies!
Man must yield to Heaven’s decrees,
Submissive, yet appalled, he sees
His fairest works in ashes sleep.”

The two first lines here quoted are given by the composer as a loud burst of despair, which is gradually softened down to an expression of humble resignation.

The casting is now completed, —

“ To the dark lap of mother earth
We now confide what we have made.”

The chorus composed for these and the immediately succeeding words, is perhaps the finest chorus in the whole piece. It brings out with great delicacy, the idea of the poet, conveyed by the words,

“ And yet more precious seed we sow,
With sorrow in the world’s wide field,
And hope, though in the grave laid low,
A flower of heavenly hue ’t will yield,”

The music expresses with much beauty the blending of the emotions of sorrow and hope. This is followed by a short dirge, succeeded by a beautiful recitative and air to the words,

“ Alas ! the wife, — it is the dear one —
Ah ! it is the faithful mother,
Whom the shadowy king of fear
Tears from all that life holds dear,” &c.

The whole of this *scene*, if so it may be called, is full of pathos and tenderness. The metal is then suffered to cool, the mould is broken up, the bell is christened, and immediately swung aloft, to be “a neighbour to the stars.” We have not space to speak particularly of the fine music which abounds in this last part. The concluding chant,

“ All together ! heave !
Its birthplace see it leave.
Joy to all within its bound !
Peace its first, its latest sound ! ”

is full of grace and beauty.

In the construction of the music of this piece, it seems to us that the composer has had one very great difficulty to contend with. We think that there is too *much* poetry, to admit of an adequate musical expression in a single composition. This is merely an opinion, and as such we offer it with due deference to better judges. A song, in order to admit of proper musical expression, should, as it seems to us, be confined to the bringing out of one single leading idea, and so of a chorus, or any other portion of a musical work. In order to give *unity* to a musical composition, there must be one leading musical idea, pervading the whole, and carefully brought out and set before us in all its aspects. Now if the composer is compelled to pass rapidly from one thought to another, he will almost of necessity abandon the musical unity of his composition. Handel’s famous song, “ I know that my Redeemer liveth,” which we have always considered to be the finest vocal composition extant, is a good exemplification of what we have been saying, — it being wholly confined to the musical expression of a single thought. It appears to us that the music of the “ Song of the Bell ” also illustrates the correctness of our opinion, though the composer has certainly succeeded remarkably well in overcoming the difficulty.

We wish to call attention to another point. It is remarkable that the composer has in no single instance, that we can recollect, attempted a direct *imitation* by means of music, of any object which he wished to describe, but in every case has made his music descriptive, by endeavouring to express and to excite in others the same emotions and feelings as are expressed by the

poetry. It may safely be said that there is hardly a sound in nature which is a musical sound, and that just in the same degree as we succeed in imitating natural sounds, we depart from music. We think any person may be convinced of this by examining either the "Creation" or "Seasons" of Haydn. In both those immortal works there are some, though not a great many instances, of direct imitation of natural sounds, and we think it may be confidently asserted, that even the genius of Haydn has not succeeded in making those passages musical. The author of the music of the Bell has shown that in this matter he thoroughly understands the powers and objects of his art.

We cannot conclude without recommending this composition to the serious study of the lovers of music. It is published for the use of the Academy, in a form very convenient for study, and with the orchestral accompaniments compressed into a very practicable arrangement for the piano forte. It deserves to hold a place in every collection of piano forte music.

3. — *The Columbian Bard; a Selection of American Poetry, with Biographical Notices of the most popular Authors.*
By the Editor of "The Bard," &c. London; Hamilton, Adams, & Co. York; J. Shillito. 1835.

THIS is a very pleasing little volume, neatly and even elegantly printed. It contains a great variety of poetical specimens, taken from our best poets. The introduction is written in a very friendly tone towards this country. The following remarks show a candid spirit, and are an honorable testimony to the pure morality of our youthful literature.

"After a careful examination of a very large proportion of American Poetry, the Editor is happy to be able to state, that it possesses one characteristic which, he believes, is peculiar to the poetical literature of the New World, and which will prove a powerful recommendation to a very large and increasing number of his fellow countrymen; namely,—that it is of the *purest moral character*, and, for the most part, contains a distinct recognition of the leading truths of divine revelation. A fact like this, is a most convincing proof of the high state of moral feeling that distinguishes the inhabitants of America, notwithstanding all that bigoted and hired political partisans have asserted to the contrary."—pp. xv. xvi.

The biographical notices are confined to the statement of a few leading facts in the lives of the respective authors, and very brief views of their poetical character. They are marked by a